

Fall Antiques at Rhinebeck

A Virtual Version of Rhinebeck

by Fran Kramer

We have known promoter Frank Gaglio of Barn Star Productions for decades, have covered dozens of his shows, and are always amazed by his innovations. We thought he had used up his bag of ideas by now, but he found one of his best for the November 13-15, 2020, Fall Antiques at Rhinebeck virtual show on the Ruby Lane platform in the person of Leigh Keno, one of twin brothers from upstate New York who found fame—and maybe some fortune—learning everything they could about antiques.

Leigh and Leslie Keno are known for their knowledge and their ability to share their experiences and advice with others—at an auction, in their dealer business, and above all on *Antiques Roadshow*.

There was breadth and depth of information from all.

As Cindy Robinson of As Good As Old, Lower Gwynedd, Pennsylvania, said, “You cannot be in the field of antiques and never hear of the Keno brothers.... Frank does whatever it takes to keep the enthusiasm.”

How did Gaglio connect with Leigh Keno on the idea of a virtual fall Rhinebeck show? Keno’s crystal ball was lit two years ago when he visited Gaglio’s show at Lyndhurst in Tarrytown, New York. Keno predicted that something else would be coming for antiques shows in the future—something online, some “missing link.” There would be something with conversations and video to showcase pieces for sale and the dealers selling them, and there would be oversight of someone with knowledge and experience to lead the discussions.

And so a concept was born. Why not combine the knowledge from an experienced antiques show promoter, an experienced dealer, auctioneer, and appraiser, and an experienced antiques website? Gaglio was the promoter; Keno was the interviewer; and Ruby Lane’s Alex Gardner was the visual pro and the tech-in-chief.

Just before and during the Rhinebeck show, when viewers went to the Ruby Lane site and clicked “Our Partners,” they saw “Rhinebeck with Leigh Keno,” a lush color video that began by showing the road along the Hudson River to Rhinebeck in its autumn colors. Then the scene shifted into the Rhinebeck Antique Emporium, which has a large indoor space and offered to host the video sessions instead of the original plan, which was outside Gaglio’s home in Rhinebeck, New York. Keno was casually dressed but ready for the camera, and there were 12 dealers, most of whom were part of the fall Rhinebeck event.

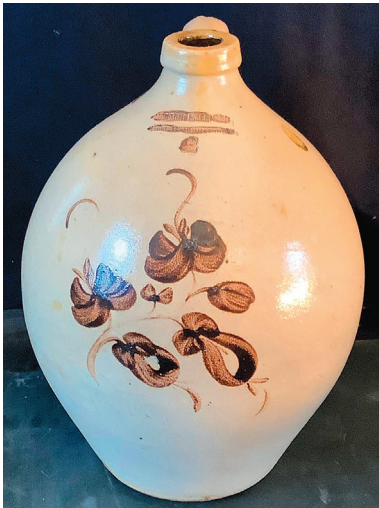
On the morning of November 13—the show ran until midnight on the 15th—my husband and I took our laptop into our library and sat on the sofa for several hours, hypnotized by the videos we saw. We saw knowledgeable dealers having great dialogues with Keno. There was breadth and depth of information from all. Tables were turned upside down; the reverse sides of framed paintings were shown; and jokes and anecdotes were told. It all came alive.

As Good As Old’s Cindy Robinson told us, “It was fun.” She watched as her husband, Doug, talked about the pieces he brought.

Doug Robinson told us after the show that “Leigh, in person, was delightful, enthusiastic, easy to talk to, and encouraged us to tell him what we knew about the pieces, saying, ‘What do you understand about what you brought?’”

The give-and-take and the one-on-one with visuals and conversations were the missing ingredient from previous online antiques shows, said Keno in a phone interview after the show. To see the videos, go to (www.youtube.com) and search “Fall Antiques at Rhinebeck.”

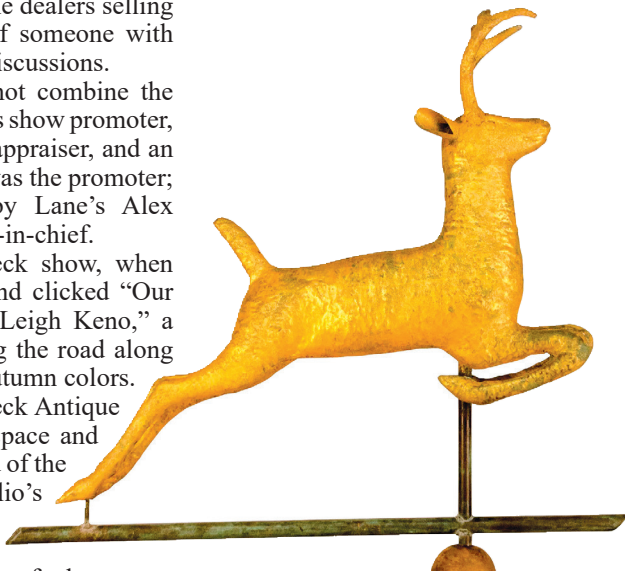
The offer for video participation was open to any Rhinebeck dealer, past or present. Dealers came if distance was not too big of a problem. Some came from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Those who took part felt comfortable talking about their



Nancy Douglass of Willow Springs Perennial Antiques, Clifton Park, New York, is a garden stylist, and that explains her use of the word “Perennial.” She does excellent research on what she sells so that the correct information may last. For the Rhinebeck video she chose this extremely rare ocher-decorated 16” high crock by Norton and Fenton, Bennington, Vermont, priced at \$1900.



Nancy Douglass of Willow Springs Perennial Antiques offered a 19th-century walking deer weathervane, attributed to E.G. Washburne, 17” x 21”, priced at \$3200. When asked about the ease with which she spoke to Keno and what she knew, she told us that it is easy to talk about the things you love and the objects you sell. Plus, she is always learning. In the video, Keno explained why one should examine the wear on the rod of the vane. Since they tended to lean, there should be more wear on one side. It is the tiny details that are important. Douglass added that the shadows on walls created when light is on vanes are always a visual surprise.



Cindy and Doug Robinson of As Good as Old, Lower Gwynedd, Pennsylvania, showed Keno three of their favorites, including this leaping stag weathervane attributed to Cushing and White. With an early gilded surface, it was \$11,500.

Root-head turtle confidence decoy, carved from a single piece of wood, possibly Native American, \$1475 from As Good as Old.



Another favorite from As Good As Old. Priced at \$12,500, this 18th-century Bible box with snipe hinges and rosehead nails, of Pennsylvania Dutch origin, is rare.

businesses and took the time to bring some of their favorite inventory to discuss with Keno in the video for the online show. It’s possible that some of the video will be used for future exposure.

Dealers included Frank Gaglio of Barn Star Promotions, Rhinebeck, New York; Lesley Lorant of GPSF Antiques, Fishkill, New York; Robert Jarvenpa of Westerlo, New York; Sanford Levy of Jenkinstown Antiques, New Paltz, New York; William Union of Art and Antiques Gallery, Worcester, Massachusetts; Gary Sergeant of G. Sergeant Antiques, Woodbury, Connecticut; Greg Kramer of Greg K. Kramer and Co., Robesonia, Pennsylvania; Nancy Douglass of Willow Springs Perennial Antiques, Clifton Park, New York; Judith and James Milne of New York City; Charles Glasner of Rhinebeck Antique Emporium, Rhinebeck, New York; Bill Hamel of Hamel20, Red Hook, New York; and Doug and Cindy Robinson of As Good As Old, Lower Gwynedd, Pennsylvania.

And what did they say and show in their videos?

Nancy Douglass of Willow Springs Perennial Antiques loves weathervanes, she said, because they throw interesting shadow silhouettes with light shining on them on a dark background like a wall. They also hold their value. She brought three for Keno to examine. She also appreciates rare stoneware, and I learned from her discussion that sailor’s valentines were not made by sailors but rather were sold to them in Barbados in the 1850s-80s. It was a thriving cottage industry that used shells available on the beaches. They were bought by sailors who needed a gift to bring home. She added, “It is easy to talk about objects you love.”

Charles Glasner, representing Rhinebeck Antique Emporium, brought an Ammi Phillips painting that Keno spied and identified as Glasner was bringing it in. He discussed where and how he bought it as Keno examined the frame.

Lesley Lorant of GPSF Antiques has “shops” on



In this scene from the show video, Sanford Levy (left) and Leigh Keno were talking about the two paintings by Cole that Levy offered.



Sanford Levy of Jenkinstown Antiques, New Paltz, New York, has been in the antiques business for 50 years and still finds it fun and interesting. He knew Leigh Keno's parents (as did we) and said the Keno videos from the show were a way to restart the business. Levy has put the video of himself and Keno on his own website. "Frank and Leigh worked hard on this, and I actually got calls," he said. Although we usually associate Levy with furniture, he loves paintings, especially of the Hudson River valley where he lives. These two oil on board paintings by an artist named Cole, a farm scene (above) from Sydney, New York, 24" x 30", signed "Cole," and a Hudson River scene (below), 21" x 27", were priced at \$2400 together.



eBay and Ruby Lane and has done many Rhinebeck shows. In business since 1984, he also exhibits at the Hyde Park Antiques Center, Hyde Park, New York. He brought a pair of chairs, a dining room table, and a group of pottery items. He said he tries to find unusual and quality items. He said, "Ruby Lane is a pioneer, likely the first online platform to bring brick-and-mortar shows to virtual antiques shows online. They and Frank think out of the box." He did sell an item he offered in the online show, but it was afterward, from his booth at the Hyde Park Antiques Center. Still, he mused, the buyer may have seen it during the Rhinebeck online show and then gone to his contact information on Ruby Lane, which shows he has a booth at the center.

Sanford Levy of Jenkinstown Antiques has been in the antiques business for 50 years, and he finds it still interesting. "Frank worked hard at this, and I put the video on my website," he said. He commented that the use of a video reflects the world we live in and is another way to restart our business.

Gary Sergeant called this approach "informational tech online. We all did our homework, and we focused

Gary Sergeant of G. Sergeant Antiques, Woodbury, Connecticut, got a big reaction from Keno as they examined the Sigrist-Moore George I giltwood table. Keno, who is usually associated with Americana, loves over-the-top French-influenced English furniture such as this table. For \$350,000, it could be yours! It's six figures because of its provenance, rarity, and condition. Early 18th-century British furniture makers referenced the work of top French designers in form, shape, and ornament. James Moore the Elder (c. 1670-1726) created walnut and mahogany furniture for King George I and became famous for his Louis XIV-inspired gesso pieces made between 1715 and 1725. In 1728 the inventory and stock in Moore's company was sold at auction. His legacy was sustained by his son James Moore the Younger. Tables by and in the manner of James Moore are in the collections of Kensington Palace, Windsor Castle, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Sergeant says it is not always who you are but the objects you sell, so do your homework! He commented that now, in the pandemic, dealers (and everyone else) have more time to talk. Sergeant has created an investment group focused on fine antiques.



Gary Sergeant of G. Sergeant Antiques offered *The Wreck* by Andrew Wyeth (1917-2009), circa 1939, priced at \$185,000. It was a wedding gift from the artist to a New England family and had been passed along in their family.

on the objects. Also, in today's world dealers have more time to talk. They are not too busy to talk." He added that the floodgates are open. Heavy-duty buying for major collections is booming. He also mentioned a point we all need to remember—we are carrying the baton for the next stage. We are carrying it for John S. Walton, Israel Sack, Clarence L. Prickett, and other past giants of the antiques community.

Bill Hamel of Hamel20 recalled decades ago when he visited the Rhinebeck shows as a student at Bard College. And now he is doing the shows. A specialist in 20th-century decorative arts, he stressed how these objects show the relationship between architects and the objects they created. Architects designed more than just buildings; they designed furniture and even kitchen housewares. Hamel said he had dozens of inquiries during the show and made two sales as a result, a pair of bookends and an Art Deco figurine of a skier.

For the three-day online show, over 1614 items were offered by about 40 dealers, and the listings ran for 54 pages. There was no cost to exhibit, and there were no booth fees. The top five categories in terms of numbers offered were jewelry, with 305 listings; art, 279; porcelain and pottery, 212; folk art, 127; and furniture, 97.

Alex Gardner, marketing and business development coordinator for Ruby Lane, is as down to earth as he can be, despite his impressive title. He commented, "For the Barn Star Fall Antiques at Rhinebeck, we incorporated a video format, connecting buyers with some of their favorite dealers. The event overall saw, conservatively, over 80,000 page views. Leigh's talent and knowledge as a host, appraiser, and auctioneer created an ambiance shows needed. His ability to find the story behind the pieces gave everyone at home a chance to connect with the show on a more personal level. It was a pleasure to work with Frank, Leigh, and all the dealers involved.

We are constantly looking for ways to bring a more dynamic experience to the online show realm."

Gardner was responsible for the production and organization, in filming and in tech. He told us that Tim Miller, owner of Big Chief Studio, was the editor of the videos. Miller had produced the series *Buried Treasure*, hosted by the Keno brothers. Gardner added that "all of this would not have been possible without our amazing software engineers at Ruby Lane. The video will be up for some time."

Keno said, "I have known Frank Gaglio all my life. I cannot say no to him. Yes, I would do it again. You know, I was only there to make the pieces look good. The dealers were ready with answers to all my questions. They really knew what they were selling! This is the future—visual and vocal participation."

Gaglio said, "We wanted a way to make our online Fall Antiques at Rhinebeck more interesting and allow the dealers to engage with customers on a more personal level, showing viewers there is also an educational aspect to these online shows. When we spoke with dealers about their participation in the event, we also invited them to be in a video with Leigh, and they loved the idea. But of course many were so far away they simply could not make the trip. Leigh was a tremendous asset to the show and took two days out of his busy schedule to participate, and I am deeply grateful."

We are giving the last word to Doug Robinson. "For me personally, as a dealer selling and buying antiques, I think of the marketplace as a three-legged stand: in-person shows, shops, and online virtual shows. At this time in our lives, we need this balance, for whatever future is ahead."

For more information, check the websites (www.barnstar.com) or (www.rubylane.com).





This 1810-40 Sheraton-style dining table is composed of two demilune tables with attached leaves. The length when extended is 95½". It was \$495 from Lesley Lorant of GPSF Antiques. Lorant told us he also had a set of six black stenciled chairs, \$425, that would go nicely along with the table.



Lesley Lorant of GPSF Antiques, Fishkill, New York, offered a pair of blue-upholstered Neoclassical style side chairs with jasperware-like medallions, 1910-40, from a Chappaqua, New York, estate. The chairs were a bargain for anyone at \$145 the pair.

Just a pitcher, you say? Look at its appearance closely. This is a piece designed by Robert A.M. Stern in 1985, manufactured in Italy for New York based-Swid Powell, the collaboration of post-Modernist architectural designers Nan Swid and Addie Powell. They formed a company in 1982 that offered the best in housewares designed by architects. This pitcher, silver plate over brass, priced at \$775, keeps good company. Other Swid Powell examples are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Art Gallery collections. This water pitcher "is another of the most iconic designs by Stern for Swid Powell...[and] retains the 'Swid Powell,' 'Made in Italy' marks and Stern's signature on the underside," writes Bill Hamel of Hamel20, Red Hook, New York, on his website.



Have you heard of the Dudson Brothers pottery? Here's a clue—Great Britain. Lesley Lorant of GPSF Antiques offered a group of this pottery, circa 1940. The company operated from 1902 to 1980. Priced from \$30 to \$60 each, most of the pieces were sold after the Rhinebeck show.

Want to guess what these are? Hints: nickel-plated cast iron, made in 1968, 4" x 4" x 4". They were designed by Carl Auböck (Austrian, 1924-1993). They are hard to find, unmarked, and very popular. The price is for both—having only one would not serve their purpose. Their name starts with a "B." Yes, bookends! These Carl Auböck bookends, model 5403, were \$2375 from Hamel20.



Greg Kramer of Greg K. Kramer and Co., Robesonia, Pennsylvania, showed Keno a wooden Uncle Sam whirligig, 23" high, in all original paint. Kramer said this kind of video is the "wave of the future."



The exceptional small stoneware jar has blue decoration that Keno said displays Chinese influence. "Wonderful," he told dealer Greg Kramer of Greg K. Kramer and Co. during the video. The jar was \$7800.



Alex Gardner (left) of Ruby Lane gets ready for one of the Fall Antiques at Rhinebeck show online videos he organized. Leigh Keno (right) and dealer Bill Hamel prepare for the video. Photo courtesy Ruby Lane.

